20 YEARS!
1987-2007
C!N
RETURN
WizardWorld Chicago Newsfest

Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by Comic Shop News in cooperation with Matt Brady and newsarama.com

Wieringo Passes

As this issue was going to press, *CSN* learned that acclaimed artist *Mike Wieringo* has died after suffering a massive heart attack; he was only 44 years old. *CSN* will offer a more complete look at Wieringo's career in next week's issue.

DC's Arena League

As ***Countdown*** moves inexorably towards the ***Final Crisis,*** DC is adding more ***Countdown***-related tie-ins to their line-up... but few are likely to attract as much attention as the four-issue weekly ***Countdown: Arena.***

Of course, ***Arena*** implies that there will be some major combat—but it's the combatants that will make this series so interesting.

DC's *Dan DiDio* assures readers that there's "a *whole* lot of fighting going on. This is a DC fanboy dream book, hopefully. We've examined all the known worlds of the multiverse, and we're picking one champion from each of the worlds to come and compete to be part of Monarch's army. Something that we're going to be finding out is that all of the worlds of the multiverse are very familiar places to long-time DC readers. These are not only multiverse worlds that existed from before the past ***Crisis***, but also we're seeing some of the worlds that are reflective of the more popular Elseworlds books."

Monarch will decide which champion is chosen from each Earth. "There are nine characters that he finds vital to the multiverse, and he picks three champions who have distinct similarities to battle it out to find out who's the strongest of the three," DiDio told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady*. "This is his major strike force. The army he's assembled in the Bleed is really for control of the multiverse. He's pulled in lieutenants, such as Forerunner, and what you'll also see is a second in command in Lord Havok and his Extremists team. With these characters, he's puling together an elite strike force for a major battle that will be taking place later in ***Countdown***."

So who are some of the champions he will choose? "You're going to see multiple interpretations of Batman fighting it out, like the Batman from ***JSA: The Liberty Files*** versus the Batman from ***Gotham by Gaslight*** versus the Batman from ***Red Rain***."

Monarch knows which heroes he wants in his team—but what he doesn't know is which *version* of the hero that he wants. "There are reasons why he picks each individual one, but you find out that in order to have this army work, he needs one Superman, one Batman, a Wonder Woman, a Green Lantern, a Flash, a Blue Beetle, a Nightshade, a Starman, and a Ray. For this team, each one serves a particular purpose. Each one brings either a strength or a tactical skill which he thinks is essential for his conquest."

How does he convince these heroes to face off against alternate versions of themselves? "Some go in willingly, a couple are forced into the competition, and once you step into each arena, not all the heroes are going to emerge from the arena alive," DiDio said.

Is this DC's way of paring down the superhero-multiverse herd? "A little bit. Remember, we're talking about a multiverse here where there are 52 universes out there, some known, some unknown. These are characters from the known universes, so there are a lot of stories yet to be told with some of them, and some of their stories end here. This will get people talking for a while.

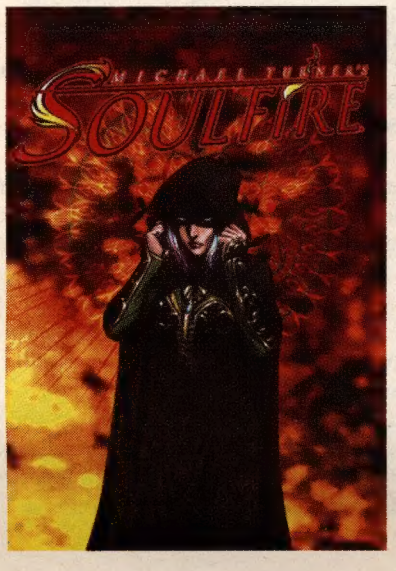
"Again, what you're going to see is interpretation of characters that you have seen before, in past stories, but also, we're going to be seeing versions of characters from worlds that we haven't seen. Such is the case with Green Lantern of Earth-5, which used to be Earth-S – the Shazam universe. So rather than seeing what we've come to think of as the traditional hero of that world, we're going to see someone who's new to that world."

So who will decide the winners of these trials by combat? As it turns out, the readers themselves will help to make those decisions. "What we want to do is that in several of the cases, we're going to post the competitions in September at dccomics.com. Once we have them all posted online, we're going to have the fans vote on some of them. The winners, as voted by the fans, will then go on to be in the battle which comes later in ***Countdown***."

Who's doing the honors on this series? "*Keith Champagne* will be writing all four," DiDio said. "He did a great job for us on the ***World War III*** stuff, and really had a great sense of action and adventure that's necessary for this, and the art will be handled by *Scott McDaniel & Andy Owen*, and they're going to be doing all four of the thirty-eight page issues."

Countdown: Arena is slated for December release.

WizardWorld Chicago Newsbits: Other Publishers



- *Stjepan Sejic* has been tapped as ***Witchblade*** artist—and he's committed to illustrate # 116 through #150, which will keep him on the book through 2010!
- *Mark Millar & Tony Harris* are working on an Image book called ***War Heroes;*** look for it in the summer of 2008.
- *J.T. Krul* and *Marcus To* have been tapped to do the creative honors on ***Soulfire Volume 2,*** a continuation of the *Michael Turner*-created fantasy saga set in a world in which the magic has gone away—and Aspen assures fans that the entire series will ship on time.
- *Michael Turner* and *David Wohl* (***Witchblade***) will be reuniting to create an all-new Aspen property which will debut in 2008.

Moving Into the Fantastic Forefront

For far too long, Marvel's premiere superhero title has been relegated to a comfortable second-class status; aside from occasional tie-ins with events like ***Civil War,*** it's coasted along comfortably, guided by talented creators who maintained the status quo.

That's about to change, though.

Marvel has confirmed that *Mark Millar & Bryan Hitch,* the creative team behind ***Ultimates*** and ***Ultimates 2,*** will take over ***Fantastic Four*** early next year

The duo take over the reins of the series in early 2008 with plans to return the series to the top of the sales charts—and by the sounds of things, they don't plan on leaving for a while... and they plan on delivering the book on a monthly schedule!

"The plan had always been to follow ***The Ultimates*** with an ***X-Men*** relaunch where I would write the three main X-books and we were going to have Hitchy plus two other artists on these books for a year," Millar told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady*. "I plotted my stories way back in 2004 so this is something we'd been planning for ages. We were very enthused, spoke about it on the phone almost every day and just kind of took it for granted this is what we were launching in January 2008.

"But last year someone casually mentioned that JMS was leaving ***Fantastic Four*** and they didn't have a new creative team in place. I tried to block it out of my head, but for the rest of the call I was just nodding and pretending to be listening, thinking how great it would be to write the *real*

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

Fantastic Four book. This is like getting the keys to the family car as far as the Marvel Universe is concerned.

"I couldn't stop thinking about it and phoned Hitchy, who surprised me by being equally excited. We spoke for about three hours, building each other into a frenzy and then called Marvel. We wanted to shelf the ***X-Men*** plans and do ***Fantastic Four*** instead. So we called *Tom Brevoort* and everything clicked into place beautifully. I started writing the book before Christmas an Hitchy started drawing shortly after he finished ***Ultimates*** 2 in the New Year. He had a few weeks to build up his drawing muscles again, but he's been working very consistently since about February, I think and pretty much bang on schedule."

"I'd loved Mark's run on ***Ultimate FF***," Hitch said. "It seemed so full of life and a real counterpoint to the density and claustrophobia of Ultimates and I was really quite jealous that *Greg Land* got to draw it. The book seemed like it was in the same breathless, big scale, relentless mode of our separate runs at ***Authority*** and I really fancied

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something like that after ***Ultimates***. Sort of a palate cleanser.

"I remember us chatting in the summer last year and it came up in conversation that FF was maybe going to be available and we both seemed to hit on doing it and by the end of the call a tentative suggestion had become an enthusiastic urge. It really got me through the last two issues of ***Ultimates*** too ,as I couldn't wait to start it." Why take on the rigors of a monthly series rather than doing a limited series? "When you do a special project you can't really roll your sleeves up and operate on the book," Millar said. "You're essentially just borrowing the characters from the current writer and promising not to interfere with his plans...

"Also, ***Fantastic Four*** was billed as 'The World's Greatest Comic Magazine,' and it's been a while since it really lived up there in the top ten. Again, there's that little fanboy part of us that wants to put the book right up there on the front-lines of the Marvel Universe. Other than a few spikes for events of promotions, it's only sold around an average 45-50K these past ten years and we wanted to just put it up there with the ***Avengers*** and ***Spider-Man*** books again. They told us the Avengers characters were dead and we shouldn't do ***Ultimates*** before we started, but we knew it would work and we feel the same charge here. When you love something it's contagious. We want this to be the book everyone is reading again."

Millar is excited about recapturing the sense of wonder that defined ***FF*** in its glory days. "What I loved about ***FF*** as a kid is that it was constantly evolving like a real family," Millar said. "People got married, people broke up with their girlfriends and found new ones, friends became enemies, enemies became friends, children were born, and so on. To a boy who had seen Clark Kent gulping and wishing wishing he could tell Lois Lane how he really felt for four decades this seemed incredibly radical and I want to apply that same radicalism to our run. Things are about to move on and the characters are going to find themselves in slightly different situations. It's the only way to keep the book fresh. I want it to feel as new as the book felt in 1965."

"It's much more important to follow the spirit and intent of the thing than it is to attempt to slavishly reproduce it," Hitch added. "I'm not and never will be *Jack Kirby* or *John Byrne* (whose run is arguably the equal of Kirby's for fun and invention; more coherent too) but I do remember how it felt when I read that stuff and that's what I want to reproduce. Or try to anyway."

"The secret to all the best stories is that they're rooted in the ordinary and supped-up to the fantastic," Millar explained. "The Baxter Building is a dream version of the house we grew up in, the Fantasti-Car is a dream version of Dad's old Ford and so on. Even Doom is that weird Uncle your Mum and Dad don't speak to anymore. It's got to be rooted in the real world to work and Byrne was very good at this too..."

Hitch is confident that he can maintain a monthly schedule. "I'm drawing it quicker. I've been working on it for about five months and am four issues and nine covers in. Mark is writing issue # 10 now, so he's galloping nicely. It's actually getting quicker the more into it..."

The first *Mark Millar-Bryan Hitch* issue of ***Fantastic Four*** is slated for January 2008 release.

A Ghul-ish October

Comics are filled with characters who died and then got better. But Ra's al Ghul may be the only character in comic book history who died, *was cremated,* and got better.

The diabolical villain who was first introduced in 1971 by *Denny O'Neil & Neal Adams* rose to the top of Batman's Rogues Gallery, thanks in part to his role as the master of the Lazarus Pits... and as the grandfather of Batman's son, Damian, born to Ra's al Ghul's daughter Talia. But it appeared that his criminal run had come to a conclusion in 2004's ***Batman: Death and the Maidens,*** when he was reduced to ash.

But he's about to return in "The Resurrection of Ra's al Ghul," an eight-part story that begins in ***Batman #670*** in October before continuing into November's Bat-titles. Group editor *Mike Marts* explained how it all came about, and why they chose to proclaim the event in the title of the story arc rather than playing coy with readers.

"We decided right from the start to let readers know exactly what the story was about—hence the straightforward story arc title, 'The Resurrection of Ra's al Ghul,'" Marts said. "That being said, this tale has plenty of mystery throughout its entire run. The fact that Ra's might be resurrected is just one piece of the intricate puzzle that *Grant Morrison* and crew have cooked up.

"The involvement of Talia al Ghul and Damian and the al Ghul lineage is an ingredient that Grant's been playing with since he started on Batman...but the decision to bring Ra's back into the picture was cooked up between Grant and *Dan DiDio* at last year's San Diego Comic-Con, I believe."

So did Ra's *really* die in the aforementioned ***Death and the Maidens,*** or was it just a clever ruse? "Ra's died in ***Death and the Maidens***. And figure that took place a little over a year ago in DC Continuity time... Batman felt this particular chapter of his life was closed for good...if Ra's is indeed back, I don't think Bruce is going to be too happy about it."

So why bring back a character who seemed to be dead-dead? "Let's face it—Batman has the best rogues gallery of villains in all of comics. Penguin, Riddler, Scarecrow, Poison Ivy, the list goes on and on...but even with all of these great villains, if the one or two arch-villains—like Joker or Ra's al Ghul—go missing for too long, there's just this void that needs to be filled. A villain that great can't stay dead forever, right? Especially one with a knack for immortality!"

Rather than just serializing the story in ***Batman,*** "all of the core Batman Family titles will be involved: ***Batman, Detective, Robin,*** and ***Nightwing***. In fact, this is the first inter-group ***Batman*** crossover that we've attempted in some time.

Any creative changes occurring at the same time? "Our biggest change is the arrival of *Tony Daniel* as the regular artist on ***Batman***. Tony's been wanting to draw the Dark Knight for a long, long time and we've finally been able to hand him the reins. And fans of *Andy Kubert* shouldn't worry—Andy is working on a top secret Bat-project as we speak...something we hope to be able to tell you more about soon.

"Other than Tony, we have a combination of some regular Batman talents along with some exciting guest *creators...Grant Morrison* and *Paul Dini* will write the ***Batman*** and ***Detective*** chapters, of course, while guest writers *Peter Milligan* and *Fabian Nicieza* step in for two months to pen ***Robin*** and ***Nightwing***, respectively. *Freddie E. Williams* stays on as ***Robin*** artist, while *Don Kramer* moves over to take on the two ***Nightwing*** chapters. And to cap things off, Wildstorm regular *Ryan Benjamin* will draw the two ***Detective*** installments." The story will begin with "a prelude in ***Batman #670*** in October. And then it runs throughout ***Robin, Nightwing, Detective, Batman*** in November and December... Suffice it to say that when all is said and done the lives of all the characters involved—Batman, Robin, Nightwing, Talia, Damian and Ra's—won't be the same."

Killraven Meets the All-Rob Squad

For more than a third of a century, Killraven has enjoyed an all-star creative lineup that included such talents as *Don McGregor, P. Craig Russell, Joseph Michael Linsner,* and *Alan Davis*. Next year, Killraven will return once again in a new series produced by the "All-Rob Squad" of *Robert Kirkman* and *Rob Liefeld*.

"Our book is a new take on Killraven," Kirkman told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady*. "It's firmly set in the Marvel Universe of the future, but a number of years ago--Mars invaded and took over. They defeated the Marvel heroes and they've been running the planet for so long, nobody even remembers a time when Earth *wasn't* controlled by Mars.

"We first meet Killraven as a gladiator--a trained fighter, there to entertain the Martian masses. He quickly escapes, thrown into a world even he isn't all that familiar with since he's been contained in the arena most of his life. We follow him through the Marvel Universe as he encounters some familiar faces and artifacts and eventually forms The Future Avengers--which isn't going to be all that great for the Martians.

"This is a story about a small band of freedom fighters trying to retake the Earth; the odds are against them but they're a determined bunch—they're Avengers."

How did Kirkman and Liefeld end up resurrecting a Marvel cult favorite? "This is something Rob pitched to *Joe Quesada* in San Diego of 2006 while *Jeph Loeb* and I were hanging out with Joe. Joe was very excited

about it and gave it the green light on the spot. Rob said he wanted to work with a writer on it—and I couldn't help but raise my hand. Jeph pointed my way too—but if he'd have raised his hand I swear I would have jumped over the table. He's got a couple years on me, so I could have taken him. I almost killed *Jeph Loeb* over this book, I'll admit it.

"But yeah, it all came together in a five minute span at a con--cool stuff. It's the kind of stuff I'd read about but never experienced myself. We've been working on it a bit here and there in-between Rob's work on ***Onslaught Reborn*** with the esteemed, and previously name-dropped, *Jeph Loeb*."

What made the concept so appealing for Kirkman and Liefeld? "I think Rob and I are both guys who really like doing new stuff. I had some of the most fun I've had at Marvel doing the recent ***Ant-Man*** series, which featured a new guy. I created loads of new characters for ***Marvel Team-Up*** and I have a few creator-owned books that feature new characters some people may have heard of.

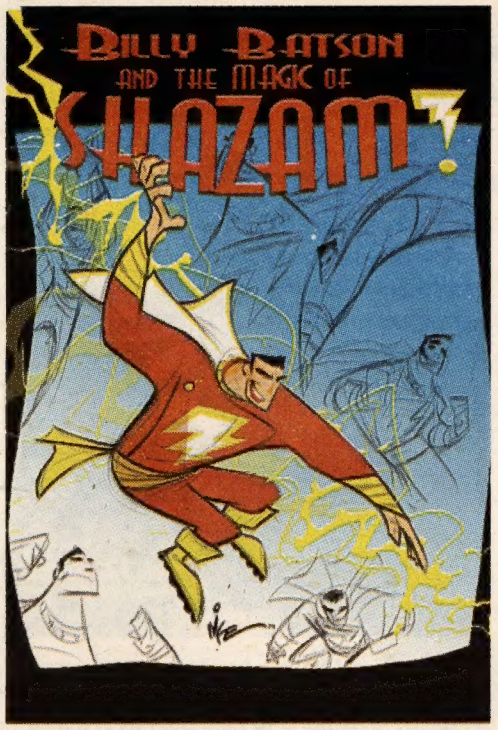
"Rob's m.o. has always been, come on a book, and make it his own—he introduces new characters left and right. When you're someone as creative as him, it's no trouble to just throw in five or six new guys to liven a book up... Killraven is the kind of property at Marvel you can get a little leeway with, so we're able to make it our own and really take it to levels I don't think people will expect.

"This book might as well be called ***New Killraven and the Future Avengers***. It's a whole new thing. Classic Killraven is still there--there's an awesome ***Essential*** TPB you can order and enjoy—it's great stuff, but this is a new version, a new take. We're breaking new ground."

Kid-ding Around

Thus far, the all-ages Johnny DC line has been the home of animation-inspired comics... but as DC hinted a few weeks ago, that's about to change.

Beginning next year, DC will add a trio of original titles to the line, featuring characters from the DCU. The three books are ***Billy Batson & the Magic of Shazam*** by ***Herobear & the Kid*** creator *Mike Kunkel*; ***Super Friends*** by *Scholly Fisch* and a variety of artists, including *Dario Brizuelo, Joe Staton, & Horacio Ottolini*; and ***Tiny Titans***, by *Art Baltazar*.



DC Coordinating Editor *Jann Jones* explained how the books came to be. "When I moved into the role of Coordinating Editor and started doing the sign off on the kids' books of the Johnny DC line, I saw that they were really good, solid books, but I didn't feel like I could give them to a four year old or a five year old, or just any kid in general. Despite their connection to the animated projects, they were still dealing with the more serious issues – cases where if the heroes don't save the day, it's implied, or shown that people will die. I think that's kind of heavy to put on a younger audience.

"Some of them were very serious in tone as well. They were good reads, don't get me wrong, and we had great creators working on them, but they weren't making me laugh. Likewise, I have a very religious sister, and when she would go through my bundle of comics, there was very little that I would feel comfortable with handing her to give to my nephews to read. I wanted to make sure that there was a place for that in the DC Universe."

Billy Batson & the Magic of Shazam! is designed to appeal to fans of *Jeff Smith's* recently-wrapped ***Shazam!*** miniseries. "With Jeff's miniseries, we really established that we can have different versions of Shazam and the other Marvel Family characters co-existing within the DC Universe at the same time. So Mike is really picking up where Jeff left off and it's amazing. It definitely captures a lot of the family and the fun and innocence of Jeff's miniseries, but it's not a sequel."

If there's no diabolical threat or life-threatening menace in ***Super Friends***, where's the drama? "In my books, the danger is more mischief. If heroes don't save the day, no one's going to die; a city isn't going to be destroyed. It's nothing like that. ***Super Friends*** is more about helping in the community and cats stuck in trees and problem solving. This book, in particular, is really geared to a younger audience. ***Shazam*** and ***Tiny Titans***, I feel, can be ready by adults and kids and both audiences will find the humor and the joy of the stories. ***Super Friends*** really is geared to the same audience as the toy line..."

As for ***Tiny Titans***, "Art's stories are so funny and cute, and they use all of the things that little versions of the Titans would do. In issue #2, the girls use Cyborg as an Easy Bake Oven. Beast Boy gets a puppy. Everyone learns not to play tag with Kid Flash. It's little storylines like that that bring in the magic of childhood, that excitement and innocence to the stories... The way we're presenting ***Tiny Titans***, this is the DC Universe's Teen Titans cartoon. This is what the Teen Titans watch when they're hanging out in Titans Tower. They're watching this, and are a little bummed out because they're not getting any royalties from it."

Look for all three books to debut in early 2008.

A Star-Spangled Return

Any book that features an image of Captain America with the word **RETURN** superimposed would be newsworthy... but when that book is written by *Alex Ross*, it's a genuine comic book event!

Ross described his role as "designer, cover artist, and co-storyteller with *Jim Krueger*... I'm on design, covers, and story only. This is more like ***Earth X*** or ***Astro City***."

Does the image mean that Steve Rogers is returning as Captain America? "It could mean *many* things," Ross said. "It implies as much a return of Captain America,

sure, as it also implies *my* return to Marvel – and maybe some other things. But I can tell you that my ego wasn't fueling the design of that image..."

Is this story set in current continuity, or is it set in an earlier period of Marvel history? "This one is full continuity with the cooperation of *Tom Brevoort* and *Steve Wacker*... it is immediately responsive to the goings on today. This is *not* a ***What If?*** story or an alternate earth, here."

Was the project developed before or after the events of ***Captain America #25?*** "This particular project has been in the planning stages for two years. It's just very ironic that something like Cap's death would've happened in this same time frame, but as we go forward, we can work with that, and in many ways, that makes our story more poignant."

WizardWorld Chicago Newsbits: Marvel

•Now here's a surprising combination of creator and character: Luke Cage will star in a new four-part limited series, ***Cage!***, and ***Samurai Jack*** creator *Genndy Tartakovsky* is writing and illustrating the series, which is set in the 70's and stars the afro-wearing chain-belted Luke Cage that fans remember from his ***Hero for Hire*** days. What attracted Tartakovsky to the project? "I think he is a great character, a man who has persevered through some tough times; he has paid his dues but still gets the short end of the stick. I think these are the qualities that really attracted me to the project. And I've always loved the 70's style of design, I wanted him to go through the ringer and still come back for more. I also wanted to do something with humor and action, and Cage presented that opportunity...

"Most important to me was the execution of the character and the humor. I feel like humor in comics is extremely difficult, so I concentrated on funny drawings and bizarre situations."

•Apparently Silver Surfer *will*

survive his current plight, because he'll be starring in a new series, ***Silver Surfer: In Thy Name,*** written by *Simon Spurrier* and illustrated by *Tan Eng Huat.* "I'd noticed several websites describing the Surfer as 'a sort of cosmic messiah,' which grabbed my attention," Spurrier told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Benjamin Ong Pang Kean.* "I should state very clearly that the Surfer is *not* a cosmic messiah, and he'd be the first one to say so… but it did get me thinking. What if someone really did believe Norrin Radd was a divine saviour? Wouldn't that mean that the Surfer would feel sort of responsible for any actions that person took in his name… no matter how depraved or violent?"

•***Invincible*** artist *Cory Walker* will take over as illustrator of ***Punisher War Journal*** for a three-part story that begins in ***PWJ #13.***

•The ramifications of ***World War Hulk*** will continue through a number of books, all of which will carry the banner ***World War Hulk: Aftersmash.***

•Don't look for a rapid conclusion to the Skrull storyline spinning out of ***New Avengers;*** according to *Joe Quesada,* it will culminate in the spring of 2008.

•Every script for ***Ultimate Wolverine Vs. Hulk*** has been turned in, but the books won't be published until *Leinil Francis Yu* has finished the art for the entire series. Marvel is also holding the second *Orson Scott Card* ***Ultimate Iron Man*** series until every installment is both written and illustrated.

•A ***Marvel Zombies Omnibus*** looks likely once the sequel series wraps up.

•***Ultimates 3*** by *Jeph Loeb & Joe Madureira* should kick off in December, with *Jeph Loeb & Ed McGuinness's* ***Ultimates 4*** following once the Loeb-Madureira series wraps.

•***Eye of the Camera,*** the sequel to ***Marvels,*** is three-quarters of the way done, with three issues in the can. When all four parts are finished, Marvel will solicit for the series.

•The continuation of ***Nextwave*** is up to *Warren Ellis,* Quesada said, adding that he bothers him about it all the time.

•*Mark Millar* is steadily working on his Marvel series ***1985,*** which he described as a story set in our world, where the villains of the Marvel Universe discover it doesn't have any heroes. This leads to a bunch of kids who are also Marvel fans deciding to defend the world because they know the characters.

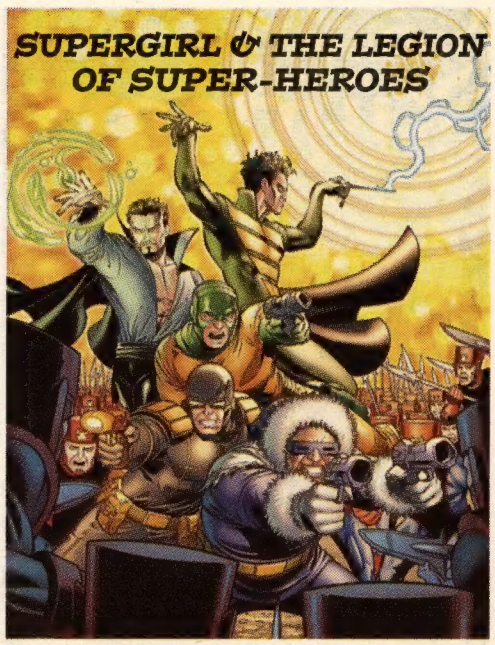
•*David Michelinie, Bob Layton, & Ron Lim* are working on a four-part ***Iron Man/Dr. doom*** limited series slated for late 2007 release; the bulk of the story will take place shortly after the Iron Man/Dr. Doom meeting featured in ***Iron Man #s 249 & 250*** back in 1989.

•According to *Joe Quesada,* the backlash from events in ***Astonishing X-Men*** will resonate through other X-books and stories, establishing a stronger link between that series and the rest of the X-Universe. Quesada also said the break between creative teams was designed so there won't be as many long breaks during the next story arcs.

•*Chris Claremont* leaves ***New Excalibur*** after a crossover storyline that involves that series and ***Exiles.*** He will be replaced by ***Wisdom*** writer *Paul Cornell,* who plans to change the line-up (which may happen during ***Messiah Complex***).

WizardWorld Chicago Newsbits: DC

•*Dustin Nguyen* will take over the artistic duties on ***Detective Comics*** in early 2008, joining writer *Paul Dini* on the monthly series. "I'd have to say Paul Dini's tone and direction influenced my take on Batman long ago," Nguyen said. "Growing up, I took in more of Batman through the animated series than I did from comics... I'm loving that he's using characters I like. I like the short self contained arcs as well. Really fun



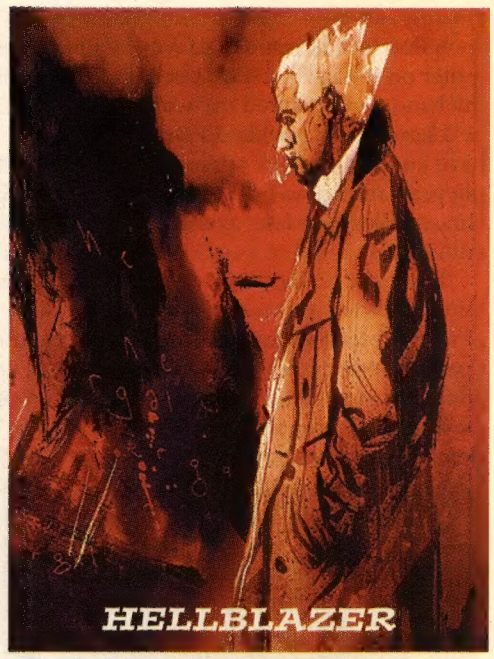
for me, since I have a hard time following books for long."

•*Francis Manapul* will take over as artist of ***Supergirl and the Legion of Super-Heroes*** beginning with #37, "which is planned to be released I believe, right around the anniversary of the Legion," Manapul said. "I'm hoping to stick around for as long as the writer decides to stay." So who *is* the writer? Neither Manapul nor DC are saying right now. Manapul did "doing some tinkering with the team's look. I'm quite fond of *Dave Cockrum's* designs so I'm trying to work in some elements of that along with *Barry Kitson's* contribution. Mostly I'm trying to simplify rather than modernize."

•*Brian Wood's* long-awaited Vertigo graphic novel ***Northlanders,*** a complex Viking tale, is slated for release later this year.

•According to artist *Peter Gross,* ***Testament*** will end with its 22nd issue. Neither he nor writer *Douglas Rushkoff* initially intended to end the series there, but the story was written that was just "so great that there's no reason to try to best it," Gross said.

•DC has several projects in the works to commemorate John Constantine's twentieth anniversary. *Jamie Delano & Jock* are producing an original ***Hellblazer*** graphic novel, ***Aberrations.*** Secondly, *Simon Oliver* will write a mini-series starring Chaz, Constantine's cab driver sidekick, entitled



Constantine Presents: Chaz: The Knowledge. Other surprises are in the works as well, but DC isn't ready to reveal the details quite yet.

•In case you're wondering, Vertigo is *not* one of the 52 Universes of the DC Multiverse.

September's Top Twenty Comics

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #544

J. Michael Straczynski (W); Joe Quesada (A)

(Marvel JUL072139 $3.99; also available in a signed edition (JUL073531 $19.99))

FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN #24

J. Michael Straczynski (W); Joe Quesada (A)

(Marvel JUL072140 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Peter Parker faces his darkest hour as he must come to terms with the loss of someone dear to him. But how far will he go in order to win just one more day?

Why Should You Care?

This is the story that changes Spidey's life in the most startling manner imaginable. No Spidey fan is prepared for the ending of this story arc—and neither is Peter Parker!

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER #6

Brian K. Vaughan (W); Georges Jeanty (A)

(Dark Horse JUL070027 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

What has Faith been up to since the end of Season Seven? Find out in the second arc of ***Buffy Season Eight!***

Why Should You Care?

Y—The Last Man and ***Lost*** writer *Brian K. Vaughan* joins the creative team with this issue, but the master plan for this teevee-season-in-comics-form is *Joss Whedon's* all the way!

CAPTAIN AMERICA: CHOSEN #1

David Morrell (W); Mitch Breitweiser (A)

(Marvel JUL072150 $3.99)

CAPTAIN AMERICA: CHOSEN #2

David Morrell (W); Mitch Breitweiser (A)

(Marvel JUL072151 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Is a Marine corporal caught up in insurrectionist combat *really* fighting alongside Captain America, or is it all in his mind? Find out in this out-of-continuity Cap saga.

Why Should You Care?

Best-selling author and Rambo creator *David Morrell* makes his comic book debut with this standalone series that explores the significance of an American icon in today's world.

COUNTDOWN TO MYSTERY #1

Steve Gerber & Matt Sturges (W); Justiniano, Walden Wong, & Stephen Segovia (A)

(DC JUL070184 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Down-on-his-luck Kent Nelson inherits the Helmet of Fate... but will its powers make his life better or worse? Meanwhile, Eclipso becomes the temptress of the DC Universe, enticing heroes to join the dark side... and wait 'til you see who succumbs to the temptation!

Why Should You Care?

Following in the ***Mystery in Space/Tales of the Unexpected*** two-story format, ***Countdown to Mystery*** presents a double serving of ***Countdown*** spinoff tales in each issue.

COUNTDOWN: SEARCH FOR RAY PALMER—WILDSTORM #1

Ron Marz (W); Paco Herrera (A)

(DC JUL070186 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

The search for Ray Palmer takes Kyle Rayner, Donna Troy, and Jason Todd into the WildStormverse, where they meet a much more dangerous breed of heroes, including the Authority and Gen13.

Why Should You Care?

Want to get a look at the new DC Multiverse? Then get on board, because the ride starts here!

CYBLADE: PILOT SEASON #1

Joshua Hale Fialvok (W); Rick Mays (A)

(Image JUL071977 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Cyblade's in training to become an elite superspy and an assassin... but who is she working for?

Why Should You Care?

This ***Alias/La Femme Nikita*** style action thriller is the latest entry in Top Cow's line of "test the waters" books intended to find which concept fans most want to see developed into a series.

GREEN ARROW/ BLACK CANARY WEDDING SPECIAL #1

Judd Winick (W); Amanda Conner & Jimmy Palmiotti (A)

(DC JUL070198 $3.99)

JLA WEDDING SPECIAL

Dwayne McDuffie (W); Mike McKone & Andy Lanning (A)

(DC JUL070195 $3.99; also available in a signed edition (JUL073536 $19.99))

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #13

Dwayne McDuffie (W); Joe Benitez & Victor Llamas (A)

(DC JUL070196 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

The DCU is about to celebrate with a major wedding event... but there's an Injustice League preparing to throw a monkey wrench into the festivities! Will it turn out that Black Canary's response to Green Arrow's proposal may have been her biggest mistake ever?

Why Should You Care?

A newly wedded couple moves into the spotlight—and so does an all-new ***Justice League*** creative team and the re-formation of the Injustice League. That makes *three* good reasons!...

GROO: HELL ON EARTH #1

Mark Evanier & Sergio Aragones (W); Sergio Aragones (A)

(Dark Horse JUL070018 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Groo's world is getting hotter—well, except for the places where it's getting even colder than ever before. So what's a misguided, misinformed barbarian to do?

Why Should You Care?

Evanier & Aragones present a long-overdue new misadventure of comics' most notorious barbarian bumbler—and if you ever enjoyed the "funny" in funnybooks, this is the series for you!

INFINITY INC #1

Peter Milligan (W); Max Fiumara (A)

(DC JUL070201 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Everyone thought that Lex Luthor's Everyman Project had been relegated to history—and with it, Infinity Inc. But a year later, it appears that Starlight, Fury, and Nuklon can't put their experiences behind them... and now John Henry Irons suspects that their problems may be the harbinger of something much larger.

Why Should You Care?

Peter Milligan offers readers a new look into the lives of ordinary people who were transformed into something much more... but that may not have been a gift at all.

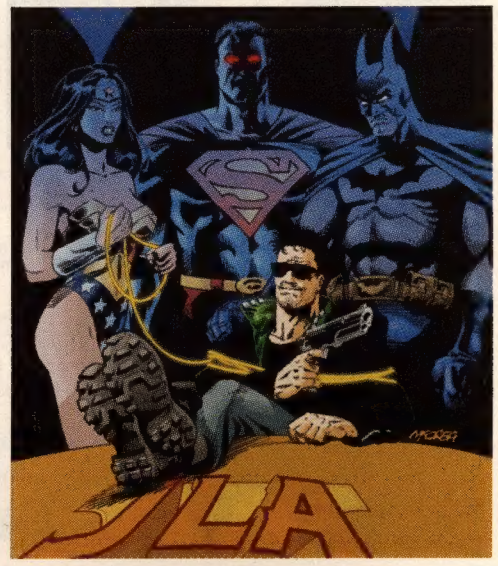
JLA/HITMAN #1

Garth Ennis (W); John McCrea (A)

(DC JUL070236 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

There's problem on the JLA moonbase... problems that not even the world's greatest heroes can solve without some outside help. But is Tommy Monaghan really the right man for the job?...



Why Should You Care?

Garth Ennis & John McCrea bring back the cult anti-hero in a surprising crossover two-parter (and let's hope it does so well that it paves the way for a reprinting of the entirety of ***Hitman***!).

JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA #9

Geoff Johns (W); Dale Eaglesham & Ruy Jose (A)

(DC JUL070230 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Just when the members of the Justice Society try to enjoy a few normal moments, their world is about to be shaken by the arrival of the team's newest and most surprising member to date.

Why Should You Care?

Want to get the whole story on the arrival of the ***Kingdom Come*** Superman to the roster of the Justice Society? Then you'll want to begin with this prologue issue!

LOBSTER JOHNSON: THE IRON PROMETHEUS #1

Mike Mignola (W); Jason Armstrong (A)

(Dark Horse JUL070023 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

As America hovers on the brink of World War II, it's up to Lobster and his allies to save the world from a mysterious villain hell-bent on fulfilling a deadly prophecy.

Why Should You Care?

Hellboy creator *Mike Mignola* supplies both scripts and covers for the first-ever Lobster Johnson solo spinoff.

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #1

Marc Guggenheim, Stuart & Kathryn Immonen, Stuart Moore, & Rich Koslowski (W); Stuart Immonen, Clayton Henry, & Dave Wilkins (A)

(Marvel JUL072177 $3.99; also available in a signed edition (JUL073637 $19.99))

What's the Scoop?

Marvel's rotating-star anthology series returns with an extra-length first issue featuring Spider-Man, Hellcat, Damien Cross, and the System.

Why Should You Care?

Marvel Comics Presents offers adventures of Marvel's superstars alongside new concepts and lesser-known characters in a monthly multi-story format—so it just may be that when you pick up an issue because of an old favorite, you'll discover a new favorite at the same time!

MICE TEMPLAR #1

Bryan Glass & Michael Avon Oeming (W); Michael Avon Oeming (A)

(Image JUL071921 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

A young mouse who had always assumed the Mice Templar to be the stuff of legends is forced to become a part of the legendary Templars in order to save his own family from enslavement by brutal rat masters.

Why Should You Care?

Bryan Glass & Michael Avon Oeming kick off an anthropomorphic fantasy saga that combines the mouse-adventure of ***Redwall*** and the epic scope of ***Lord of the Rings***.

SPAWN: ARCHITECTS OF FEAR #1

Arthur Claire (W); Aleski Briclot(A)

(Image JUL071925 $6.99)

What's the Scoop?

One of the five Angels of the dreaded caste of the Architects calls on Spawn to help them restore one of their oldest and most secret weapons in this metaphysics-and-mysticism-shrouded tale.

Why Should You Care?

Acclaimed ***Spawn: Simony*** artist *Aleksi Briclot* is back with another stunning Spawn adventure that captures the horror and majesty of *Todd McFarlane's* signature creation.

TEEN TITANS #51

Sean McKeever (W); Alé Garza & Mario Alquiza (A)

(DC JUL070242 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

The Titans of Tomorrow pay a visit to the present... but their motives don't appear to be friendly, since they've already taken out the Justice League!

Why Should You Care?

Ever since they first showed up in the pages of ***Teen Titans #s 17-19***, readers have clamored to learn more about this Titans team from the future and how they came to be—and apparently DC has been listening!

ULTIMATE SPIDER MAN 100 PROJECT TP

Mark Bagley, J. Scott Campbell, Frank Cho, Neil Gaiman, Adam Kubert, Andy Kubert, George Pérez, Joe Quesada, John Romita Sr., John Romita Jr. & others (A)

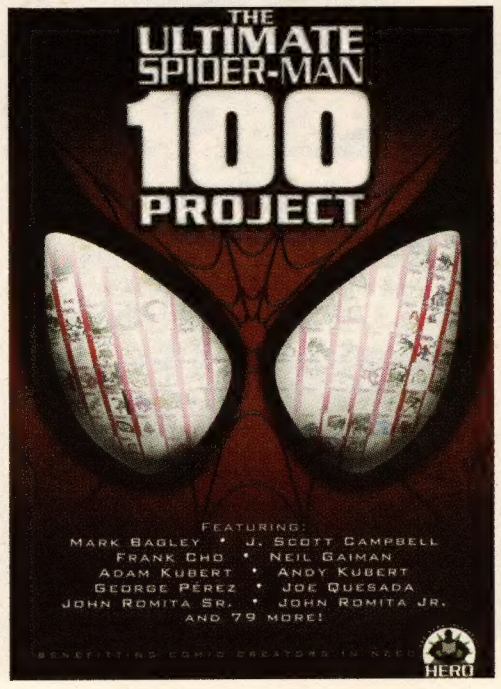
(Hero Initiative JUL073615 $10.00)

What's the Scoop?

To raise money for a good cause, some of the industry's most revered talents created special covers for the landmark hundredth issue of *Brian Bendis & Mark Bagley's* ***Ultimate Spider-Man #100***—and now you can enjoy almost every one of them in this unique collectible.

Why Should You Care?

Not only do you get 100 amazing Spidey illos, but you also help raise money for an organization devoted to helping Golden and Silver Age artists who worked in the field before it offered things like pensions, retirement funds, or health benefits. Why not make *their* Golden Age a little bit better?...



UMBRELLA ACADEMY: APOCALYPSE SUITE #1

Gerard Way (W); Gabriel Bá (A)

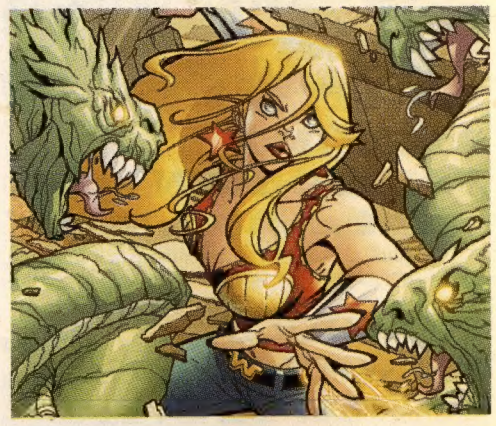
(Dark Horse JUN070020 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

A group of child heroes is reunited by the death of their mentor... but will they be able to put their complex history behind them in order to save the world one more time?

Why Should You Care?

My Chemical Romance lead singer *Gerard Way* is the creator and writer of this remarkable series that's should draw in newcomers just like ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Anita Blake,*** and ***The Dark Tower***.



WONDER GIRL #1

J. Torres (W); Sanford Greene (A)

(DC JUL070200 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

After the disastrous events of ***Amazons Attack,*** Wonder Girl hopes to get her life back in order... but the rift between her and Wonder Woman isn't *making that any easier!*

Why Should You Care?

At long last, Wonder Girl moves into a starring role of her own in this six-issue limited series that brings major changes to the fan-favorite character.

X-MEN: EMPEROR VULCAN #1

Christopher Yost (W); Paco Diaz (A)

(Marvel JUL072199 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Vulcan is the Shi'Ar Emperor... Havok is the leader of the rebellious Starjammers... and as you might suspect, they're most definitely *not* seeing eye-to-eye...

Why Should You Care?

"The Rise and Fall of the Shi'Ar Empire" continues here, X-fans!

Collected Cool:
September's Best Reprint Volumes

CAPTAIN AMERICA BY ED BRUBAKER OMNIBUS VOL 1 HC

(Marvel JUL072222 $74.99)

Reprinting ***Captain America #s 1-25*** (including that famous death issue!), Cap's ***65th Anniversary Special,*** and ***Winter Soldier: Winter Kills.***

LOOKING GLASS WARS: HATTER M HC

(Desperado JUL073475 $24.99)

Hardcover compilation of the *Frank Beddor-Ben Templesmith* adventure-fantasy expansion of the world of Alice in Wonderland.

MARVEL MASTERWORKS NICK FURY VOL 1 HC

(Marvel JUL072221 $54.99)

Collecting the Nick Fury stories from ***Strange Tales #s 135-153*** along with ***Tales of Suspense #78*** and ***FF #21,*** this volume spotlights the transformation of Nick Fury from a WWII soldier to Marvel's foremost secret agent.

SHOWCASE PRESENTS BATMAN AND THE OUTSIDERS VOL 1 TP

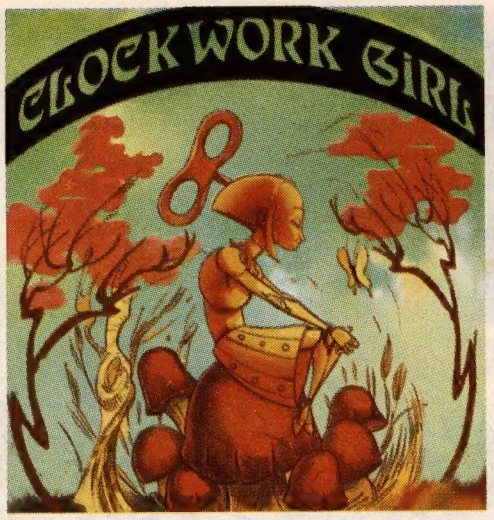
(DC JUN070216 $16.99)

Timed to coincide with the debut of the new ***Batman & the Outsiders,*** this hefty black-and-white compendium collects ***Batman & the Outsiders #1-19, Brave & Bold #200*** and ***New Teen Titans #16.***

STRANGERS IN PARADISE VOL 6 POCKET TP

(Abstract JUL073192 $17.95)

Collecting ***Strangers in Paradise #s 77-90,*** the remarkable final issues of *Terry Moore's* phenomenal human interest drama.



Check 'Em Out:
Books You Should Be Reading

CLOCKWORK GIRL #1

(Arcana JUL073275 $0.99)

A nameless robot girl forms a friendship with a mutant boy in this bargain-priced preview issue of the new series.

CONFESSIONS OF A BLABBERMOUTH

(Minx/DC JUN070258 $9.99)

In the latest female-reader-friendly Minx graphic novel, *Mike Carey, Louise Carey, & Aaron Alexovich* introduce Tasha, a girl from a dysfunctional family who wields her blog as her ultimate weapon.

ELFWORLD VOL 1 TP

(Top Shelf JUL073878 $12.95)

It's from Top Shelf, one of the industry's foremost alternative publishers—and it features elves, who aren't normally on Top Shelf's creative radar. Check out this indy-comics fantasy anthology featuring work by *Jeffrey Brown* and others—but don't expect to just another elf story!

RAY HARRYHAUSEN PRESENTS SINBAD, ROGUE OF MARS #1

(BlueWater JUL073360 $3.50)

The latest original series inspired by a classic *Ray Harryhausen* film is the best to date. ***Sinbad, Rogue of Mars*** combines a strong, imaginative storyline with polished visuals, and the result is a book that would have made a great Harryhausen film!

WONDER WOMAN ANNUAL #1

(DC JUL070199 $3.99)

Long, long ago, a writer named *Allen Heinberg* and an artist named *Terry Dodson* reinvented Wonder Woman as part of DC's One Year Later event. Now, *more* than One Year Later, they wrap up their story in this Annual's final installment of "Who Is Wonder Woman?"

FYI:
Great Additions to Your Reference Library

CONAN: THE PHENOMENON HC

(Dark Horse MAY070015 $29.95)

Paul Sammon offers a long-overdue comprehensive look at the history of fantasy's most famous barbarian in prose, art, film, and comics.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF COMIC BOOK HEROES VOL 3: SUPERMAN

(DC JUN070177 $19.99)

Michael Fleischer's long-unavailable reference work is brought back into print.

SILVER AGE SCI FI COMPANION SC

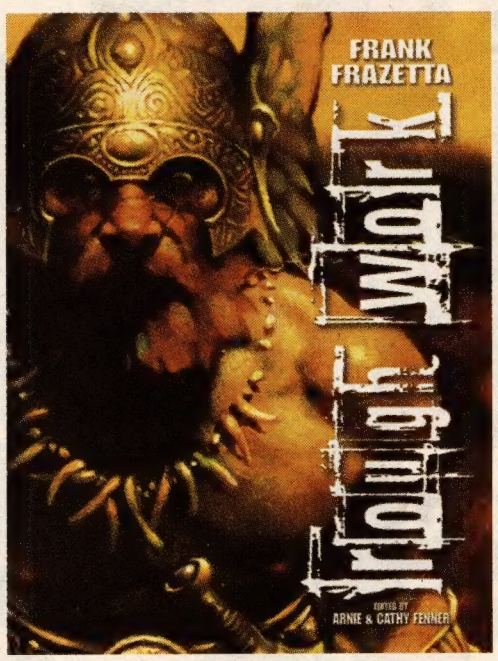
(TwoMorrows JUL073885 $19.95)

Mike W. Barr takes a look at DC's Silver Age SF titles from the *Julius Schwartz* era, spotlighting the amazing array of SF tales by *Gardner Fox, John Broome, Carmine Infantino, Gil Kane, Murphy Anderson,* and many others.

SPECTRUM PRESENTS FRANK FRAZETTA ROUGH WORK HC

(Underwood JUL074065 $19.95)

The creative processes of one of the field's most influential illustrators is highlighted in this volume that features black and white and full-color renderings from Frazetta's sketchbooks, along with concept art and more.



Hot Commodities:
September's Hottest Merchandising & Collectibles

IRON MAN MINI BUST 3-PACK

(Bowen JUN074562 $120.00)

Something old, something new, something Silver, something.... okay, I got nothin'... Bowen offers its second Iron Man minibust set; this one consists of Retro Iron Man, Silver Centurion Iron Man, (both sculpted by *the Kucharek Brothers)* and Adi Granov Iron Man (sculpted by *Eric Chan).*

NIGHTWING 13" DELUXE FIGURE

(DC Direct FEB070373 $69.99)

Dick Grayson's current costumed alter-ego is the focus of DC Direct's latest 1:6 scale figure. Includes an authentically detailed fabric costume, includes two escrima sticks, an alternate mask, and a display stand.

SANDMAN ABSOLUTE STATUE

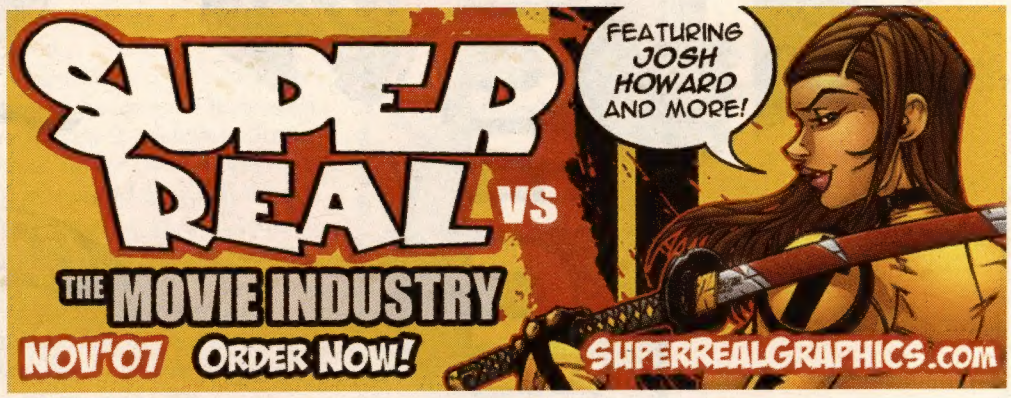
(DC Direct FEB070364 $175.00)

Jim Maddox does an exceptional job on the sculpt of Sandman, based on *Mark Buckingham's* art..

WOMEN OF THE DC UNIVERSE DONNA TROY BUST

(DC Direct FEB070375 $45.00)

The final bust in the *Adam Hughes* series is faithfully adapted in three dimensions by *Jack Matthews.*



FROM THE PAGES OF

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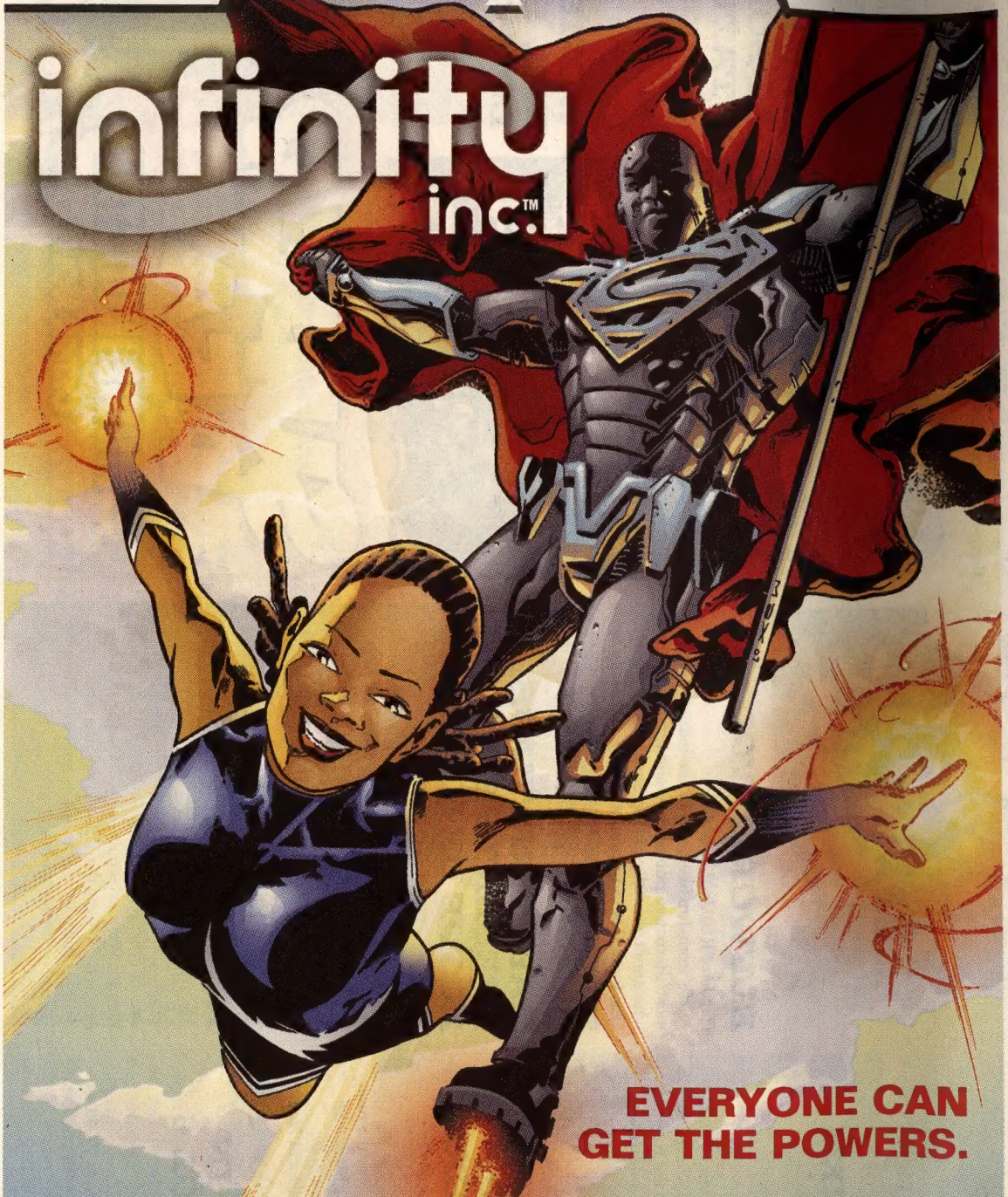
infinity inc.™



EVERYONE CAN GET THE POWERS.

ONLY SOME DARE TO USE THEM.

AN ONGOING SERIES

Written By
Peter Milligan
Art By
Max Fiumara

SEPT 2007

DC

dccomics.com

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